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USSR MAY NOT SEEK PLACE IN POSTARMISTICE
POLITICAL CONFERENCE

Recent statements by a Soviet official at the UN suggest that the USSR may wish to avoid playing an overt role in the post-truce political conference. Soviet delegate Tsarapkin, [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] cited a paragraph of the Korean armistice agreement as the only mention of the political conference and pointed out that this paragraph called for a conference "of both sides." He indicated his inability to understand the belief among UN delegates that the General Assembly had the specific responsibility for naming participants for the conference.

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Such argumentation may indicate that the USSR prefers a conference set-up along the lines of the Panmunjom negotiations and does not plan to seek a place in the talks. Tsarapkin had referred a few days earlier to a conference limited to the "two sides" in the Korean dispute. Officially the USSR has not considered itself a party to the dispute. Tsarapkin also indicated that, should the USSR participate, there would have to be a larger membership and "some kind of voting procedure." This alternative probably referred to a conference along the lines of a Soviet UN resolution of 3 December 1952 calling for an 11-member commission, including the Big Four, Communist China, and North and South Korea, in which the Communist members would exercise a virtual veto. Tsarapkin's subsequent intervention probably reflected Moscow's instructions to express a preference for a limited conference.

The Kremlin may consider that overt participation in the conference would have disadvantages overbalancing the propaganda opportunities of the forum. The USSR's alliance with Communist China would require it to support fully China's demands concerning the UN and Formosa, which would jeopardize its attempts at improving relations with the Western Powers. The new Soviet regime has demonstrated a desire to avoid impasses with the West contributing to international tension. The USSR may also calculate that it can better exploit differences among the non-Communist powers over Far Eastern questions from a flexible behind-the-scenes position.

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The place of a representative of the Chinese People's "volunteers" in a conference "of both sides" is not clear. The Communist proposal made at Panmunjom on February 6, 1952, defined the participants as five members from Communist China and North Korea, five from UN members concerned, with later agreement to South Korea's inclusion on the UN side. Chou-en Lai also supported the Soviet UN proposal of December 1952 calling for the 11 state conference.

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